

Eye changed

I used to think that the world was a cold place.

From the moment I was born, I had a lazy eye. People would point. People would stare. They would go on and on about how creepy I looked. I disagreed, but was helpless against it. They hated me, and as all their insults poured down on me, I slowly grew to hate myself.

People say childhood is the most splendid time of your life. That is a blatant lie; for me, it was hell. Throughout my childhood, everyone betrayed my trust; they badmouthed me behind my back. It reached a point where I was scared. Scared of their comments. Scared that I would hear the words *hideous, repulsive, revolting* reverberate non-stop throughout my brain at night. Scared that I would stare into the mirror and lack control to stop the tears from falling. I used to believe that nobody, not anybody, in this world could be trusted.

All these changed when I met Vernetta. She had a smile which went straight to my heart, something so strong that it ignited a tiny flame of hope in me. Could we ever be friends? I longed to return her a smile, to place my trust in her, but I could not. I knew that trust brought hurt, that nobody could be trusted.

Yet, something proved me wrong. Every single time I was mocked, ostracized, I would run to the restroom to cry, and when I turned around I would find her holding out a piece of tissue for me, her wet eyes giving me the comfort I needed. She would always grasp my hand and sit with me in solace, a strong support for a weak sapling like me to depend on. She was my tree of hope, someone I could rely on, someone I could trust.

Again and again, year after year. The mocking continued, the jeering sustained. But what changed was that now, there was somebody there for me, a soulmate who backed me up. She let me feel what it was like to experience warmth, she showed me what true friendship was. But mainly, she taught me something I would not have ever learnt anywhere else – She taught me how to smile.

I began to believe that happiness is a choice. A choice which comes to those who cherish life. Everyone has the power to decide if they want to live life in a bed of roses, or amongst a mangle of thorns. I realized that I had the power to determine my destiny. That I could be happy as long as I wanted to be. And most importantly, I began to believe that *people could be trusted*, that trust brings joy.

Now, at the age of fourteen, I look back at my footsteps, and I finally come to realize that the difference between now and then is not that others' perceptions have changed, but that the world feels warmer because *I* have changed.